

**IRS DECLARES NOV. 6 AS NATIONAL PROBLEM SOLVING DAY --
AGENCY TO HELP TAXPAYERS FROM COAST TO COAST**

WASHINGTON – The Internal Revenue Service will reach out across the nation Nov. 6 in a special Saturday effort to help taxpayers fix problems.

At 35 locations nationwide, people can get one-on-one tax help from IRS experts at the national Problem Solving Day. The event marks the second anniversary of Problem Solving Day, the special trouble-shooting program that has handled more than 57,000 taxpayer problems since November 1997.

“This program symbolizes the new approach at the IRS,” said Charles O. Rossotti, IRS Commissioner. “We’re reaching out to help taxpayers and focusing on improving customer service.”

At each of the Nov. 6 sessions, individual taxpayers can sit down and discuss tax problems with IRS experts. Key IRS decision-makers will be at each location to help iron out taxpayer problems. In some cases, issues that might take weeks to get sorted out can be resolved in just one sit-down meeting.

“Problem Solving Day can really cut through the red tape,” Rossotti said. “This is an opportunity for our people to roll up their sleeves and fix taxpayer problems.”

Two years ago, the IRS launched Problem Solving Day following concerns about taxpayer treatment. What emerged was an innovative approach of opening IRS doors on the weekend and bringing agency workers together to brainstorm on solving taxpayer problems.

More than 6,200 taxpayers attended the first national Problem Solving Day in November 1997, which was conducted simultaneously at locations across the country. Subsequently, regular sessions started being held once a month, with days and locations varying in each IRS District.

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In all, the IRS has handled 57,450 cases during the program's first two years. More than half the cases revolved around seven issues raised by taxpayers: audit reconsiderations (6,667 cases), Offer in Compromise issues (6,330), requests for technical/procedural explanations (4,124), Installment Agreements (4,083), account and notice inquiries (3,393), various penalty issues (3,247) and inability to pay issues (2,561).

Surveys show people attending Problem Solving Day like the program. A national customer survey taken between April and June showed 93 percent of participants gave the program's overall service a grade of six or seven – the highest scores possible. And 41 percent of participants said their problems were completely resolved during their Problem Solving Day visit.

People interested in attending this year's national Problem Solving Day are encouraged to make reservations by calling their local IRS office or the IRS toll-free number at 1-800-829-1040.

Taxpayers can visit without an appointment, but a reservation will help ensure the right IRS workers are available to address their situation. Sometimes, just making the call to the IRS can clear up the problem – making a personal visit to Problem Solving Day unnecessary.

"Problem Solving Day is a cornerstone of the IRS's continued emphasis on serving taxpayers," Rossotti said. "Our goal is to make every day a problem solving day at the IRS."

PROBLEM SOLVING DAY CITIES

State / City / Telephone Number

Alabama

Birmingham (205) 912-5705

Arkansas

Little Rock (405) 297-4745

California

Los Angeles (213) 576-3442

Oakland (510) 637-4359

Laguna Niguel (949) 360-2178

San Jose (408) 817-6550

(more)

Colorado

Lakewood (303) 571-4402

Connecticut

Hartford (860) 756-4556

Florida

Tampa (813) 348-1849

Plantation (954) 423-7684

Georgia

Atlanta (404) 338-8095

Hawaii (Nov. 2)

Lahaina, Maui (808) 984-8509

Illinois

Chicago (312) 886-0550

Indiana

Indianapolis (317) 226-5081

Kansas

Wichita (800) 401-3073

Kentucky

Louisville (615) 250-5423

Maryland

Baltimore (800) 865-6198

Massachusetts

Boston (617) 565-1550

Michigan

Detroit (313) 628-3755

Minnesota

Brooklyn Center (651) 312-7999

Montana (Nov. 17)

Great Falls (406) 452-0270

(more)

Nevada

Las Vegas (702) 455-1287

New Jersey

Parsippany (973) 921-4377

New York

Brooklyn (718) 488-3601

Bronx (212) 436-1013

Syracuse (716) 961-5512

North Carolina

Greensboro (336) 378-2334

Ohio

Columbus (614) 280-8695

Oklahoma

Oklahoma City (405) 297-4745

Pennsylvania

Philadelphia (215) 861-1100, Extension 154

Tennessee

Nashville (615) 250-5423

Texas

Farmers Branch (972) 308-7542

Harker Heights (512) 499-5000

Houston (713) 209-4506

Virginia

Richmond (804) 771-2292

Washington

Bellevue (425) 468-6036

Wisconsin

Milwaukee (414) 297-1260